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Abdullah Badawi

PM: Don't be carried away by suspicions

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PUTRAJAYA, Fri, — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi moved to temper unrealistic public expectations on the campaign against graft.

He said that recent arrests of several corporate figures, politicians and Government officials for corruption was proof that the Government was very serious in fighting graft.

"However, we must refrain from being carried away by suspicion or emotions, or trial by media, where a person is deemed to be guilty while investigations are still going on."

To prevent this from happening, he had directed the Anti-Corruption Agency to investigate all reports of graft without fear or favour.

"I have also instructed them to expedite the process of investigations but without sacrificing the thoroughness of their investigations.

"The basis for punitive action is justice and fairness, thus it is only right if we treat the accused fairly until the person is proven guilty,"

he said. In recent months, a number of high-profile individuals have been detained and charged with corruption.

They include former Land and Co-operative Development Minister Tan Sri Kasitah Gaddam; former Perwaja Steel Sdn Bhd managing director Tan Sri Eric Chia, former Selangor state executive Councillor Datuk Mohd Shariff Jajang and former Perak state executive councillor and Tapah Umno division chief Datuk Azman Mahalan.

Meanwhile, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil said that the media must continue to highlight cases of corruption and corrupt practices to create greater awareness in the society.

"Media plays an important role. When the media highlights such despicable matters it will help those involved to re-think their corrupt tendencies and prevent others from being involved in such crimes.

"It would be very embarrassing when your face appears in the newspapers," she said.